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NOTE

The term 'Britain' is used informally in the *Survey of Current Affairs* to mean the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. 'Great Britain' comprises England, Wales and Scotland.

Government and Administration

By-election and State of the Parties

Details of the result of a recent parliamentary by-election and the present state of the parties in the House of Commons are given below.

The Labour Party won the seat at Monmouth in a by-election on 16 May. The seat became vacant following the death of the Conservative MP, Sir John Stradling Thomas, in March 1991. The Labour Party candidate, Mr Huw Edwards, won by a majority of 2,406.

The result of the by-election was:

H. Edwards (Labour)	17,733
R. Evans (Conservative)	15,327
F. David (Liberal Democrat)	11,164

Four other candidates received between them a total of 876 votes; all lost their deposits. Votes were cast by 76 per cent of the electorate.

At the general election in June 1987 (see p 187, 1987), the seat was held by the Conservative Party, with Sir John Stradling Thomas polling 22,387 votes, followed by the Labour candidate with 13,037, the Alliance candidate with 11,313 and the Plaid Cymru candidate with 363. Votes were cast by 81 per cent of the electorate.

State of the Parties

Following the by-election, the state of the parties in the House of Commons is now:

Conservative	369
Labour	227
Liberal Democrats	21
Social Democrats	3
Scottish National	5
Plaid Cymru (Welsh Nationalist)	3
Ulster Unionist (Northern Ireland)	9
Democratic Unionist (Northern Ireland)	3
Social Democratic and Labour (Northern Ireland)	3
Ulster Popular Unionist (Northern Ireland)	1
Sinn Fein (Northern Ireland)	1
Vacant seat (Liverpool, Walton)	1
TOTAL	646

The four remaining seats are held by the Speaker of the House of Commons and his three deputies (the Chairman of Ways and Means and the first and second Deputy Chairmen of Ways and Means), who do not vote except in their official capacity in the event of a tie. The government majority over all the other parties is 93 although the Sinn Fein MP has not taken his seat.

Shorter Notes

MINISTERIAL CHANGES

The Rt Hon Lord Denham, KBE, tendered his resignation as Captain of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms (Government Chief Whip in the House of Lords) on 21 May. He has been succeeded by the Rt Hon the Lord Hesketh. Lord Hesketh was formerly a Minister of State at the Department of Trade and Industry.

The Lord Reay has been appointed a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Trade and Industry; he was formerly a Lord-in-Waiting (a Government Whip in the House of Lords). The Earl Howe has been appointed a Lord-in-Waiting; he joins the Government for the first time.

The Baroness Blatch, CBE, has been appointed a Minister of State in the Department of the Environment. She was formerly a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the same department and retains the same responsibilities.

EXECUTIVE AGENCIES

The Prime Minister, Mr John Major, announced in the House of Commons on 16 May a number of proposals to carry forward the development of the executive agencies established under the Next Steps initiative (see pp 176-7). This followed the publication of a report to the Prime Minister by the Government's Efficiency Unit, which had been asked to examine the relationship between departments and agencies and how departments should be adapting their structure, size and methods of working.[1]

The report contains a number of ideas for developing the roles of departments and agencies in support of ministers and suggests that departments should review their role in managing agencies. Departments are required to give strategic advice and direction to agencies, and not to get involved on a day-to-day basis. As a result, the number of people at the centres of departments could be reduced.

[1] *Making the Most of Next Steps: The Management of Ministers' Departments and their Executive Agencies.* HMSO, £5. ISBN 0 11 430055 0.

Commenting on the report, Mr Major said that the Government believed that 'agencies' delegations and flexibilities can be enlarged as their track record of performance is established, provided that essential controls on public expenditure are not jeopardised'. Mr Major announced that he had asked the Head of the Home Civil Service to set in train arrangements to ensure that the ideas in the report are taken forward in each department and agency as appropriate.

Source: *Hansard*, Vol 191, No 109, written answers, cols 247-8.

NATIONAL CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

A new National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) is to be set up in 1992. The NCIS will bring together a number of national units, such as the National Drugs Intelligence Unit (see p 189, 1990) and the Interpol Bureau, with several national intelligence functions performed by the Metropolitan Police. The existing Regional Criminal Intelligence Offices will become branch offices of the NCIS.

A steering group has been set up by the Home Secretary, Mr Kenneth Baker, to make recommendations on the implementation of proposals for the NCIS. The group has agreed that the NCIS will have no powers to direct operational police matters but will be concerned with the collection, development and analysis of intelligence relating to criminal activities. A particular role of the NCIS will be to co-ordinate information about such activities across national as well as police force boundaries.

Source: Home Office news release, 3.6.91.

Economic and Scientific Affairs

Share Ownership

In a speech on 14 May to the Association of Investment Trust Companies the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Norman Lamont, outlined the Government's objectives for share ownership in the 1990s, including a deepening of ownership. He called on the City to help achieve these objectives.

Mr Lamont described how share ownership had widened during the past 12 years to the extent that there were now over 11 million shareholders in Britain. Through the Government's privatisation programme[1] 6 million people had become shareholders in privatised companies. Many were buying shares for the first time.

Today one in four of the adult British population was a shareholder, whereas in 1979 the figure had been less than one in 14. The Chancellor believed that the sale of the two Scottish electricity companies, Scottish-Power and Scottish Hydro-Electric, should further widen share ownership in Scotland in particular, as well as in Britain generally. The forthcoming sale of the Government's residual holding of shares in BT (see p 148) should have a similar effect.

Deepening Share Ownership

Mr Lamont observed that, although there had been an increase in the number of shareholders, there had not been an increase in the proportion of equity held by private individuals. He therefore believed that 'the key objective for the 1990s is to ensure that we see not only wider, but deeper share ownership'.

Mr Lamont said that the creation of a permanent retail network for the sale of shares, as suggested in his Budget speech, could be a means of deepening share ownership. Share shops could be used in the marketing of future privatisations, including the second BT sale. The Chancellor believed that the first BT sale had made the idea of wider share ownership a reality, and he wished to see the second sale help to deepen it.

However, Mr Lamont believed that government action was no longer enough. The Government's privatisations had led the way in extending share ownership and the Chancellor now wanted to see the private sector employing the same methods. This take-up of privatisation-style campaigns to sell shares was already happening.

Encouraging Saving

Mr Lamont referred to a number of changes made in the Budget to the tax regime. He hoped that these would encourage saving and give further impetus to share ownership. Changes made to Personal Equity Plans (see p 125, 1986, and p 148) should enable more of the large, general investment trusts to introduce them. The Chancellor believed that mortgage interest tax relief had encouraged borrowing and reduced net saving. In the Budget, therefore, he had restricted this relief to the basic rate of income tax (see p 145).

[1] For further details see FCO reference paper *Britain's Privatisation Policy*, No 245/90.

Queen's Awards

The Queen's Awards for Export and Technology for 1991 were announced on 21 April. There were 118 winners of awards for export achievement and a total of 40 winners for technological achievement.

Export Achievement Awards

APV Baker (Special Projects Division)
Agrisystems (Overseas)
Allen Industrial
Allmakes
Arnold Designs
B & H Exchangers
BH-F (Engineering)
BOC Cryoplants
B R G International
The Ballantyne Cashmere Company
Baring Securities
Bechtel
Bede Scientific Instruments
Berne
Boss Trucks
British Aerospace (Military Aircraft)
British Alcan Rolled Products
Bunting Biological Control
Burlington Slate
Burn Stewart Distillers
Cabletime
Cadbury Schweppes Overseas
Constance Carroll Holdings
Carrs of Sheffield (Manufacturing)
Cirrus Research
Coates Coatings
The Cobb Breeding Company
Com Dev Europe
Combustion Developments
Corin Medical
Cutting & Wear Resistant Developments
Cyberscience
Delcam International
Designers Guild
Martin Dunitz
The Maydown Works of Du Pont (UK)
Dunlopillo (UK)
Elsenham Quality Foods
English Provender Company
Extravert Design
Farne Salmon & Trout
Fibreguide
Field Airmotive
Fisher Controls – Process Instrumentation
Flight Link Control
Formica
Gibson Centri-Tech
Glantre Engineering
HMB Subwork
Harkers Engineering
Helicon Yarns & Fibres
Hounsfield Test Equipment
House of Campbell
Hurco Europe
ICL Workstations Product Group
Industrial Market Research
The Carrongrove Mill of Inveresk
Ironspray
JEM Smoke Machine Company
J P W Loudspeakers
J S R Healthbred
Key Organics
Komatsu UK
Lee Steel Strip
Jeffrey S Levitt
Leyland Daf Holdings
Linton Tweeds
Lion Cabinets
Loughborough Sound Images
Lowe Refrigeration Company
Brett Martin
Stotfield Facility (a Division of Motorola)
NEI Peebles (Power Transformers Division)
Nautech
Newbridge Networks
OCLI Optical Coatings
The 'Old Bushmills' Distillery Company
Oxford University Press
John Partridge Sales
B A Peters
Phosyn
L E Pritchitt & Company
Quatro Biosystems
R K Textiles Composite Fibres
R S R
Racal Survey (UK)
Redman Fisher Engineering
Ricardo Consulting Engineers
Rigby Maryland (Stainless)
Robertson Geologging
L A Rumbold
Schmidt Manufacturing & Equipment (UK)
Scientific Hospital Supplies
Second Nature
Securon (Amersham)
Sinclair International
John Smedley (Hosiery Division)
Smith Wires
Spink & Son (Medal Manufacturing Division)
Starkey's Technicast
Steiner Group
Sun Valley Poultry
Synon
Technophone
Temco
Trafford Carpets
United Merchant Bar
University of Surrey
Vision Engineering
The Wayfarers (UK)
Josiah Wedgwood & Sons
Weetabix
The Wellcome Foundation
Wellman Process Engineering
Henry Whitham & Son
F G Wilson (Engineering)
Yours and Mine
ZED Instruments

Technological Achievement Awards

AMT (Holdings) jointly with the Defence Research Agency – Electronics Division (VLSI Design and Architecture Division)	Compact VLSI distributed array processor for real-time applications.
Anson	Swivel joint, resistant to highest pressures and temperatures, for use in oil industry.
BSH Industries	Device allowing heating elements of standard heated car rear windscreen to be used as a radio antenna.
Bede Scientific Instruments	Scientific instruments.
Bio-Rad Microscience jointly with The Laboratory of Molecular Biology of the Medical Research Council	MRC-500 laser scanning confocal imaging system.
British Coal Technical Department	Extraction drum for dust and frictional ignition control on coalface machines.
Defence Research Agency – Electronics Division (Gallium Arsenide Device Division) jointly with STC Optical Devices	Advanced crystal growth techniques.
Dowty Aerospace Gloucester	Composite bladed aircraft propellers.
Eschmann Bros & Walsh	'Symphony' WC-disposable colostomy bag.
Fibreguide	Air-jet units for use by textile fibre producers.
Foseco (F.S.)	'Solstar' computer simulation of solidification process as castings are formed.
GEC ALSTHOM Transmission & Distribution Projects	High voltage, liquid cooled thyristor valves.
GPT Payphone Systems	Cashless telephone service.
Guinness Brewing Worldwide	Canned Draught Guinness.
ICI Katalco	Fixed bed absorbants, catalysts and associated technology for the purification of liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons and carbon dioxide.
ICI Pharmaceuticals	'Zoladex' treatment for prostate cancer.
Institute of Cancer Research: Royal Cancer Hospital (Drug Development Section) jointly with The Johnson Matthey Technology Centre and The Royal Marsden Hospital	Platinum anti-cancer drugs and the discovery of carboplatin, which is active in a variety of cancers.
Intelligent Applications	'Amethyst' expert system for the automatic diagnosis of rotating machinery faults.
Marconi Communication Systems (Military Communications Division)	Lightweight high-frequency radio for military use.
Oxford Magnet Technology	'Active shield' magnets.
Penny and Giles Blackwood (Biometrics Division)	System for the dynamic measurement and recording of human movement over long periods of time and at any distance.
Pfizer (Central Research Division)	'Diflucan' agent for the treatment and prophylaxis of superficial and systemic fungal infections.
Portals	Process to provide the windowed thread in bank notes.
Quantel	Electronic system that brings all creative aspects of picture creation under the direct control of the designer.

(cont'd overleaf)

Technological Achievement Awards

Redland Engineering jointly with Redland Roof Tiles and Redland Technology	'Cambrian' Interlocking Slate.
Sandon Flexographic Printing Rollers	Laser engraved ceramic inking rolls.
SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals Research and Development	'Eminase' heart attack treatment drug.
Soil Machine Dynamics	Submarine cable ploughs.
Synon	Computer program with data modelling facilities.
Systematica	Computer-aided software engineering in the field of information technology.
T I Reynolds Rings	Tru-form cold rolling process to produce precision rings for aircraft gas turbine engines.
Telsis	Interactive voice equipment for automatic telephone services.
Wood Group Production Technology	Oilwell instrumentation.

The recipients represented a wide spread of industrial and commercial activity and size of company; Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and all the regions of England were represented.

The Queen's Awards for Export and Technology are published annually on 21 April (the Queen's birthday). They are made on the advice of a committee consisting of representatives of industry and commerce as well as civil servants and trade unionists. Instituted in 1965 and revised in 1975, the awards can be made to British companies and to subsidiaries of overseas companies. Recipients hold their awards for five years and may display the awards emblem on their goods, letterheads and articles for use by employees, and in advertising. A current holder of an award may apply for consideration in subsequent years in respect of a new achievement beyond that recognised by the previous award.

Winners

The 158 winners of awards in 1991 were chosen from 1,142 applicants. Companies holding current awards were recognised in 18 cases: 12 for export and six for technology. Firms with fewer than 200 employees won 106 awards: 83 for exporting and 23 for technology. The winners of the awards are listed on pp 212-4. Further information can be obtained from the Queen's Awards Office, Dean Bradley House, 52 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AG.

Export Achievement

Export awards are made for a 'substantial and sustained increase in export earnings to a level which is outstanding for the products or services concerned and for the size of the applicant unit's operations'.

Technological Achievement

Awards in this category are made for a 'significant advance, leading to increased efficiency, in the application of technology to a production or development process in British industry, or the production for sale of goods which incorporate new and advanced technological qualities'.

Forestry

Details of the revised Woodland Grant Scheme were announced on 4 June. Its aims include more planting on better land near cities in lowland Great Britain.

The Government's intention to expand the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme was announced in July 1990 (see pp 288-9, 1990). From April 1991 changes to the scheme include a new scale of establishment grants (see Table 1) for planting, restocking and natural regeneration. They also include

management grants for looking after woodlands (see Table 2).

To qualify for a better-land supplement the land to be planted must be either arable land or improved grassland. Arable land is land planted each year with arable crops, provided that the conversion to arable use has not taken place since 31 December 1987. Improved grassland is grassland which has been cultivated and reseeded within the last ten years, provided that the cultivation and reseeding have not been done for the first time since 31 December 1987. A plan preparation grant of £100 a woodland is available for those woodlands not previously grant-aided by the Forestry Commission.

Establishment Grants

Establishment grants are paid to help in the creation of new woodlands and forests, and for the regeneration of existing ones. The minimum eligible area is 0·25 hectare or 15m (49 ft) wide, but smaller areas may be accepted if the aims of the scheme are met. Particular features to benefit from grants include:

– commercial forestry blocks which leave 20 per cent of land open for landscaping;

– native tree species when the principal aim is wildlife conservation;

– schemes in which up to 10 per cent are woody shrubs (such as hazel, hawthorn, buckthorn and juniper) where ecologically appropriate;

– short-rotation coppice (including poplar, alder and willow intended to be worked in short rotation) as well as traditional coppice (such as sweet chestnut or hazel);

– small groups of trees on parkland and golf courses; and

– agroforestry – for example, poplars in grazing meadows.

Management Grants

Management grants contribute to the cost of managing woodlands to provide silvicultural, environmental and social benefits. Their main features are:

– annual payments to woodland owners who have a five-year management plan;

– special annual payments for woodlands of any age which are of high conservation value, including those classified as ancient semi-natural woodlands by the Nature Conservancy Council;

– special annual payments to help owners establish, develop or improve facilities for public access or recreation; and

– small woods supplement – sums additional to annual payments for areas of woodland less than 10 hectares.

In a speech in London on 4 June, Lord Strathclyde, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Scottish Office, said that the changes gave the scheme a different emphasis to any previous forestry grant scheme. Well-structured and well-managed forests and woodlands in Britain, he continued, provided timber, landscapes, wildlife habitats, recreation (especially near towns), a boost for rural economies and long-term use of land as an alternative to agriculture. Woodlands to qualify would also include those prominent in the landscapes of National

Table 1
Establishment Grants

Grant band	£ per hectare[a]	
	Conifer	Broadleaved[b]
Less than 1 hectare	1,005	1,575
1 to 2·9 hectares	880	1,375
3 to 9·9 hectares	795	1,175
10 hectares and over	615	975
Better land supplement	400	600

[a] 1 hectare = 0·4711 acre.
[b] Grants for native pinewoods are paid at the broadleaved rate.

Table 2
Management Grants

Size of wood	£ per hectare a year		
	Standard		Special
	Conifer	Broadleaved	
Less than 10 hectares	15	35	45
10 hectares and over	10	25	35

Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Scenic Areas. 'The Government remains firm', he concluded, 'in its support for an expansion of multi-purpose forestry in Great Britain in an environmentally acceptable manner.'

Oil and Gas

The Government has announced the latest licences granting companies the right to explore for oil and gas in the North Sea. The proportion of blocks applied for in the twelfth offshore licensing round was the highest for ten years. A fourth onshore licensing round is to be held.

Secretary of State's Statement

In a statement in the House of Commons on 23 May (*Hansard*, Vol 191, No 114, written answers, col 625), the Secretary of State for Energy, Mr John Wakeham, said that in the twelfth offshore licensing round he had received 115 applications from 80 companies for 81 of the 120 blocks on offer. The Government would grant licences for 74 blocks. The success of the round, he continued, 'was confirmed by the quality of the proposals put to us by the successful applicant companies and the exploration which will flow from these awards. This will help ensure that the United Kingdom Continental Shelf [UKCS] remains a major international oil and gas province well into the next century.'

Mr Wakeham also announced the results of the first separate round of licensing for frontier areas (see p 184, 1990). A total of 13 applications had been received from groups involving 37 companies for six of the 11 large areas of blocks on offer. Licences would be offered for all these six large areas.

Reviewing UKCS developments in 1990 (see pp 196-9) at a news conference in London on the same day, the Secretary of State said that the twelfth round pointed to fresh production coming on stream during the 1990s. The frontier round was 'an important stride into the next century'. The annual National Economic Development Office survey showed that companies intended to invest almost £5,000 million in 1991 in North Sea developments. A similar figure was forecast for 1992.

Background

Twelfth-round licences, which give the licensee the exclusive right to search, bore for and get petroleum within the licensed area, will be for an initial term of six years, during which the work programme must be completed. At the end of the initial term the licensee must surrender 50 per cent of the area, but may retain the remainder for a second term (12 years), and thereafter possibly for a further 18 years. Awards are conditional upon the licensee accepting a work programme agreed with the Department of Energy. Special conditions aim to ensure that operations are carried out with due regard to the environment and to fishing, navigation, defence and other interests. Oil spill contingency plans, and other stringent conditions to safeguard the environment, are required for blocks within 25 miles (40 km) of the coast.

For the frontier round, similar environmental, fishing and other conditions apply. Frontier licences, however, will be for an initial period of nine years. The work programme (including seismic and other pre-drilling forms of exploration) must be completed during the first three years. The licensee may retain a proportion of the area for a second term (15 years) and thereafter possibly for a further 20 years. The proportion which may be retained in the second term is dependent on the number of wells drilled by the licensee during the initial term. Financial conditions will reflect the difficult nature of frontier areas.

Onshore and Landward Licensing

In the fourth onshore licensing round, the Government is inviting applications for licences to explore for oil and gas on land and in some inshore waters. Details were announced in the House of Commons on 20 May (*Hansard*, Vol 191, No 111, written answers, col 339) by Mr Colin Moynihan, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy.

In this round, licences will be awarded under new regulations, which came into

force on 9 May. Such a licence is valid for six years and allows the licensee to search and drill. It does not confer a right of entry into land, and permission of the owner or occupier is required. All land operations are subject to local authority planning permission. If oil or gas is discovered, the licensee will need to apply for an appraisal licence to conduct a full appraisal of the discovery. A development licence is needed before the field can be brought into full production.

Holders of production licences issued before 1984 will be given the opportunity to transfer the area within these licences to new exploration licences.

Transport

Initiatives to increase rail traffic and tackle road congestion were announced on 28 May in a major speech on transport policy by the Secretary of State for Transport, Mr Malcolm Rifkind. He also supported a roads programme targeted to deal with congestion on motorways and provide by-passes. In an earlier speech on aviation, he said that the interests of the travelling public must come first.

Railways

Mr Rifkind said that he wanted to see much more passenger and freight traffic go by rail. This would help to relieve road congestion and would take advantage of existing capacity on the railways. The Government was working on four major initiatives to help railways achieve a greater share of the traffic.

1 It was expected that British Rail (BR) would carry 6 million tonnes of freight a year through the Channel Tunnel once it opened. BR was planning commercial international services from all parts of Britain, and the Government supported the necessary investment. BR's proposals for a high-speed rail link from the Tunnel to London were under consideration.

2 The Government intended to allow more competition in the provision of railway services; at present, this was limited to specialist passenger services, such as the Orient Express. Anyone who wished to provide passenger or freight services would be allowed to do so, provided they met the necessary safety standards. They would not need BR's permission to do this, nor be required to use its staff or rolling stock.

3 There were major opportunities for combined transport, using road haulage at either end of a journey, with rail taking the main burden. 'Intermodal' vehicles, which could operate both on road and railways, were seen as very promising for the future, with joint ventures between BR and the private sector either planned or operational. Industries, including road haulage, were keen to participate.

4 The existing Freight Facilities Grant had assisted over 200 schemes at a cost of some £70 million. This had resulted in saving an estimated 3 million lorry journeys a year. However, the Government had pledged to review the scheme so as to achieve more. Several improvements were therefore being made to the scheme to increase the level of payments and widen the scope of projects that could be assisted.

Road Investment

The Secretary of State said that road transport would remain the pre-eminent means of travel, whatever success the Government had in encouraging a switch to rail traffic. More improvements to the road system were therefore essential. The road programme was 'a carefully targeted programme to deal with the worst congestion on our motorways and main inter-urban links, and to provide by-passes for hard-pressed towns and villages'. The Government would not, however, be able to cater for all forecast demand. There would be cases – for example, in city centres – where it would not be desirable to build new roads, either on environmental or economic grounds.

Mr Rifkind said that, although the public sector road programme was at record levels, there should also be substantial investment by the private sector. The private sector was funding various current projects, such as the Dartford-Thurrock bridge across the Thames and the second Severn crossing. However, the Government was also interested in

introducing private finance into building overland routes. The Government was presently:

– evaluating bids for a relief road to the north of Birmingham, on which a decision would soon be announced;

– discussing plans to increase road capacity between Birmingham and Manchester with four private-sector consortia; and

– about to hold a private-sector competition for an orbital route around the West Midlands conurbation.

Urban Congestion

Mr Rifkind said that some progress on reducing urban congestion could be expected through road improvements and new road construction. However, there would be few opportunities for major new roads in Britain's cities. More imaginative initiatives were therefore required. There were two of these under way: light rapid transit and 'red routes'.

Light rapid transit schemes had the potential, in the right circumstances, to provide a quick, convenient and attractive public transport system. The Government was watching the experience of light rail schemes abroad and was pressing ahead with the introduction of systems into Britain. They would not be appropriate everywhere; it would also be important that buses were able to operate efficiently. Local authorities should therefore use their powers to create bus lanes and other bus priority measures.

The Road Traffic Bill (see pp 28-30) would provide powers to create a network of red routes throughout London. These routes would reduce delays and hence increase the reliability of transport. Mr Rifkind announced the results of research into the pilot red route on the A1 in north London. Journey times had been reduced significantly, by up to 30 per cent between the peaks. The study also showed that bus journeys were both quicker and more reliable. Red routes would also provide opportunities to introduce better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and to bring in measures to keep through traffic out of residential roads.

The Secretary of State said that it was also necessary to consider longer-term measures to reduce congestion. He would therefore commission wide-ranging research into urban congestion. This would include an assessment of the possible role for road pricing, examining also its potential wider effects, for example on the property market, and whether technology could be developed to allow its successful implementation. This research would take an estimated two to three years to complete.

In framing solutions to transport congestion, the Government needed to take account of the fact that the problems stemmed from the decisions and wishes of Britain's citizens. 'The only solution is for many of those ordinary people to make different choices. The responsibility of the Government is to help them make that choice.'

Aviation Policy

Speaking on 21 May, Mr Rifkind said that the primary purpose of aviation policy must be to serve the interests of the British travelling public and their expectation of safe, convenient and competitively priced services. He said that there were four objectives for aviation policy:

1 the need to complete the internal market in the European Community, which would involve freedom for an airline of one member state to offer services anywhere in the Community and the elimination of state subsidies to airlines;

2 the expansion of those freedoms outside the Community;

3 increased opportunities for services from regional airports direct to Europe and intercontinental destinations, thus helping regional economies and reducing congestion in the South East; and

4 the resolution of problems with the United States, which had to realise that it could not expect to maximise its transatlantic opportunities unless British airlines had similar opportunities within the United States.

The Secretary of State said that international aviation had had to operate within a tight framework of bilateral agreements. Airlines had often been state-owned and it had been hard to distinguish between the wishes of such airlines and those of the national governments concerned. This framework was now outmoded and needed to be replaced.

The move towards liberalisation had created new opportunities for airlines as well as for travellers. It was important that competition should be fair, and safeguards should therefore be developed to prevent the abuse of liberalisation. These safeguards had to be both effective and yet not too bureaucratic. A theme for the 1990s might be 'the establishment of slim and effective safeguards that can ensure fair competition internationally'.

Information Technology

An independent report on the influence and effectiveness of the Alvey Programme for Advanced Information Technology has shown that the Programme has led to a strengthening of the science and technology knowledge base.

Background

The Alvey Programme (see p 170, 1983), which began in 1983, was a five-year collaborative research and development (R & D) programme in information technology (IT). It was sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry, the Science and Engineering Research Council and the Ministry of Defence. The aim was to bolster the IT knowledge base, transfer academic know-how into industry and enhance the competitive potential of the sector. Over 300 R & D projects were initiated during the course of the Programme.

Aims and Achievements

The report,[1] published on 8 May, categorises the goals of the Alvey Programme as technological, structural and strategic. Each project had specific technological aims. Structural goals included the improvement of links between industry and academia and the general strengthening of Britain's IT R & D base. The strategic goals were to preserve an existing British IT capability and to improve Britain's performance and economic competitiveness through R & D.

[1] *Evaluation of the Alvey Programme for Advanced Information Technology.* HMSO, £17·25. ISBN 0 11 515281 4.

Technological Achievements

A range of technologies were identified and supported. Existing capabilities were built on and areas of relative weakness strengthened. However, areas in which Britain had little hope of becoming well established were excluded. The broad aims in each technology area were satisfied.

Structural Achievements

The Alvey Programme started at a time when the infrastructure for carrying out IT R & D in Britain needed to be overhauled. Resources needed to be strengthened and expanded, and their dispersed nature overcome.

Under the Programme the number of IT researchers in key areas was increased. Over 5,000 people were involved with the Programme. Alvey helped to establish a strong British IT research community, and this was reinforced by improved 'networking', higher motivation and greater visibility for that community.

A particular success of Alvey was the building of links between academia and industry, which allowed industrial teams to benefit from the involvement of academics.

Strategic Achievements

A main aim of Alvey was to improve the competitiveness and commercial performance of Britain's IT sector. This was judged to be necessary because of the deteriorating trade balance in IT in the early 1980s.

However, barriers to the exploitation of technical and structural achievements may have limited the commercial potential of Alvey. A particular barrier was the inadequate translation of R & D into production. This may have resulted from unimaginative management or from shortage of capital.

Overall Achievements

Most participants in the Programme considered that its benefits outweighed its costs, the report said. Alvey also attained many of its technical and structural targets. Where it did not achieve its strategic targets this was because it was beyond the Programme's scope to resolve the problems of Britain's IT sector. Many lessons about collaborative R & D programmes also emerged during the course of Alvey.

Lessons

The report highlights a number of lessons that could be learned. The main ones are given below:

Lessons for Industrial Participants

1 Exploitation prospects are significantly higher if R & D projects are conceived in the context of coherent strategies which link them with other projects and with clear exploitation routes.

2 R & D projects tend to be long-running and partners may withdraw. Vulnerability to this should be minimised by ensuring that the exploitation of R & D is not entirely dependent on the output of partners.

3 Firms need to improve the links between R & D and production. Improved communication between departments, the appointment of production staff specifically briefed to seek out and exploit R & D, and the secondment of staff from one department to another could all help to achieve this.

4 The tools and techniques developed in, for example, software engineering and intelligent knowledge based systems need skilled users and so it is essential that staff receive training.

Lessons for Academic Participants

1 Further effort is needed to bridge the cultural gap between academic and industrial research practice. Academics need to be more responsive to the fact that industrialists have to react to short-term commercial pressures.

2 It is possible to participate in collaborative R & D and still maintain basic research levels. Alvey shifted the emphasis onto applied work but this was not at the expense of on-going basic research.

Lessons for Policy-makers

1 Support for pre-competitive R & D is a necessary but insufficient means of boosting the performance of the IT industry. To achieve the goal of increased competitiveness for the IT industry, a programme would need greater funding and a wider scope for action.

2 R & D support must be accompanied by action to address skill shortages.

3 Costs outweighed benefits for some Alvey participants, so collaboration should not be imposed on organisations when other forms of assistance may be more appropriate.

Overall Lessons

Pre-competitive R & D programmes are well suited to some tasks but are not sufficient to bolster the competitive performance of the IT sector. Complementary private sector and government measures are needed, such as:

– the involvement of IT users in R & D programmes, to stimulate user awareness and alert IT producers to users' needs;

– the creation of strategies to facilitate the exploitation of R & D; and

– a re-evaluation of the mechanisms by which capital is supplied to finance the development and exploitation of R & D.

In both academia and the industrial workforce Alvey has strengthened the science and technology knowledge base. This is a national asset, with further potential to be exploited, which should attract investment to Britain.

Shorter Notes

RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY

A total of 77 contracts, valued at £9·6 million and aimed at encouraging the commercialisation of renewable energy in Britain, formed part of the Department of Energy's research, development and demonstration programme in 1990-91. Of the contracts, 26 are for wind power, 20 for biofuels, nine for solar power, seven for tidal power, seven for wave power, two for geothermal power and two for hydro power. There are also two strategic studies and two general studies. The Department's contribution is £7·2 million. First established in 1974, the programme has received total government funding to date of £180 million.

Commenting on the contracts on 30 May, Mr Colin Moynihan, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Energy, said that they underlined the Government's commitment to help renewable

sources play an increasing role in the diversity of Britain's energy supply. The privatisation of the electricity supply industry, he said, and the non-fossil fuel obligation (see p 353, 1990) gave 'enhanced prospects for these environmentally benign power sources to enter the market place'.

Source: Department of Energy news release, 30.5.91.

VEHICLE SAFETY

Heavy goods vehicles will be fitted with speed limiters restricting them to 60 mph (97 km/h), the Government has announced.

Speed limiters are already required to be fitted to all coaches first used since 1974. However, these devices have not been required for heavy goods vehicles. The Government is concerned that heavy goods vehicles should not exceed their permitted speeds, currently 60 mph on motorways. A preliminary consultation exercise found strong support for the idea of fitting speed limiters to new heavy goods vehicles and substantial support for fitting them to existing vehicles.

Speaking on 10 May, the Secretary of State for Transport, Mr Malcolm Rifkind, said that many drivers of heavy goods vehicles continued to ignore speed limits, despite the enormous destructive potential of their vehicles in a high speed collision. He was therefore proposing the installation of speed limiters on new and existing vehicles, which should significantly reduce both the number and severity of accidents involving speeding heavy goods vehicles. Further consultations would be held on draft regulations requiring the installation of speed limiters.

Mr Rifkind added that, in addition to reducing the number of road casualties, speed limiters would save fuel and thereby offset the cost of installation. The environment would also benefit from a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

Draft regulations for consultation were published on 17 May. These would become effective from 1 August 1992, and would require the fitting of speed limiters to all new heavy goods vehicles over 7·5 tonnes gross weight, and to all articulated vehicles first registered after 1 August 1988.

Sources: Department of Transport news releases, 10.5.91 and 17.5.91.

Environmental, Social and Cultural Affairs

Housing and Planning

More flexible planning arrangements to encourage the provision of affordable housing have been put forward by the Government. It also intends to bring the demolition of houses within the scope of the planning system.

Affordable Housing

The Minister for Housing and Planning, Sir George Young, announced the publication of new guidelines on the provision of affordable housing in the House of Commons on 13 May (*Hansard*, Vol 191, No 106, written answers, cols 3-4). He said that a new circular advised local authorities that they could negotiate with developers to include in schemes for new housing a proportion of low-cost dwellings to meet local needs. It was reasonable for planning policies to encourage such developments. However, the Government opposed the imposition of fixed quotas of low-cost housing on all new schemes, as this would not take account of local circumstances.

In rural areas the Government would encourage planning authorities to allow low-cost housing within local settlements where new housing would not normally be allowed but where there was a pressing need. The Government, Sir George added, was introducing more flexible arrangements for encouraging shared-ownership schemes. Public subsidy would be allowed for such schemes in rural areas even where there were reasonable restrictions on the occupiers progressing to full ownership. Previously, such subsidies had been allowed only if there were no restrictions on the occupiers progressing to full ownership.

Demolition of Houses

On 10 May, Sir George announced the Government's intention to bring the demolition of houses within the planning system (*Hansard*, Vol 190, No 105, written answers, cols 622-3). Amendments have been tabled to the Planning and Compensation Bill (see pp 162-4) to give effect to the proposals.

Hitherto, planning permission has not generally been required for the demolition of houses, although listed buildings and houses in conservation areas are protected. Most demolitions are uncontroversial. The Government was, however, concerned that, in some cases, buildings were being demolished without planning permission for a replacement. The local planning authority could then feel pressured into granting permission for a building which might be out of character with the area, as a preferable alternative to leaving a vacant site to blight neighbouring properties. A public consultation exercise was held in 1990, which showed that, although such speculative demolition was not widespread, its occurrence did sometimes cause serious concern. Furthermore, a recent court case decided that demolition did constitute development for which permission was necessary, although this ruling is still subject to appeal.

The Government had therefore decided, the Minister said, to introduce selective controls on demolition. It is proposed that the controls would in practice apply only to residential accommodation. If a local authority wished to prevent demolition in a particular case or in a certain area, it would be allowed to direct owners to seek planning permission before demolishing their houses. Such a direction would require government

confirmation if it was to remain effective for longer than six months. By these measures it would be possible to control undesirable demolition without placing an undue burden on either developers or local authorities.

Action against Drug Abuse and Trafficking

The Government is maintaining its drive against drug misuse and has welcomed new proposals to strengthen powers against drug traffickers. On 9 May, at a Pan-European Ministerial Conference in Oslo, Britain put forward a strategy to develop co-operation on drug matters.

GOVERNMENT MEASURES

The Government's programme of action on combating drug misuse and trafficking (see pp 186-91 and 295, 1990) was reinforced by additional measures announced by the Home Secretary, Mr Kenneth Baker, on 18 April.

Seized Assets Fund

Mr Baker said that the Government intended to establish a new fund from the financial proceeds of drug trafficking seized under international confiscation agreements. Rewards or payments offered to Britain in recognition of co-operation in international investigations will also be available to the fund.

The fund will be available for projects, either in Britain or abroad, which support anti-drug education and publicity initiatives, treatment and rehabilitation facilities, as well as special investigations or equipment for police or customs. It is envisaged that the fund will become operative in April 1992.

Mr Baker said that Britain, as one of the first countries to introduce confiscation legislation, believed that 'it is right and fitting that the proceeds of the international [drugs] trade should be used to help defeat it'.

Drug Prevention Initiative Teams

Mr Baker also announced the setting up of seven new Drug Prevention Initiative teams (see p 189, 1990). They will operate in two London boroughs (Brent and Lambeth), Bristol, Newcastle upon Tyne, Nottingham, the Wirral (in Merseyside) and Wolverhampton. A further six areas – Bradford, Dundee, Glasgow, Manchester, Salford and West Glamorgan – are being invited to set up teams within a year. A total of 20 teams would then be operating in Britain.

Other Developments

Mr Baker said that legislation would be introduced to harmonise law and practice under a European Community directive currently under consideration. This would set standards for financial institutions to identify drug money and guard against illegal laundering operations.

He added that Britain would shortly ratify the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (see p 15, 1989) and the Council of Europe Confiscation Convention, broadening the network of countries with which Britain co-operates in investigating the proceeds of the international drugs trade. Britain has made bilateral agreements with 20 countries, promoting international liaison and co-operation.

HOME OFFICE WORKING GROUP REPORT

On 7 May the Home Office Working Group on the Confiscation of Criminal Assets published proposals to strengthen the enforcement powers of the Government in its fight against drug trafficking.

Comprising representatives from the Home Office, Customs and Excise, the National Drugs Intelligence Unit, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Working Group was set up in 1990 to:

– review the operation of the restraint, confiscation and money laundering provisions of the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 (see p 336, 1986); and

– identify those areas in which changes are required as a matter of priority.

Proposals

The Working Group's main proposals are given below:

– The courts should apply only the civil standard of proof[1] in deciding whether, and by how much, a convicted trafficker has benefited from trafficking, so that the onus would then be placed on the trafficker to prove that the property was legitimately acquired.

– The Crown Court should have a greater role in deciding how a confiscation order should be enforced, whether directly against the trafficker's property or through a receiver.

– A term of imprisonment in default of payment of a confiscation order by a trafficker should not cancel the debt.

– Courts should be enabled to confiscate any further benefits from trafficking which come to light subsequent to the making of an initial confiscation order.

– The assets of drug traffickers should remain liable for confiscation even if the trafficker absconds or dies before the completion of legal proceedings.

These proposals are designed to:

– make it easier for the courts to apply confiscation provisions and to enforce confiscation orders once they are made;

– make it more difficult for traffickers to opt for imprisonment rather than paying confiscation orders; and

– increase the money received from confiscation orders.

Welcoming the Working Group's report, Mr John Patten, Minister of State at the Home Office, said that: 'It recognises the valuable addition that the Drug Trafficking Offences Act has made to the Government's anti-drugs strategy and makes useful suggestions for strengthening these controls.'

[1] Whereby a court may decide a case on the balance of probability rather than beyond reasonable doubt as required in criminal law.

DRUG MISUSE IN BRITAIN

Addiction

According to statistics published on 8 May,[1] the number of drug addicts notified to the Home Office rose to almost 18,000 in 1990, representing a 20 per cent increase on 1989. Within this figure, the number of new addicts increased by 23 per cent to 6,900.

Commenting on the figures, Mr Patten was encouraged that fewer than 10 per cent of new addicts were reported to be dependent on cocaine, indicating that Britain was not experiencing the 'explosion of cocaine misuse' affecting the United States. Also, he noted that those addicts attracted into treatment could be better advised on ways of preventing the spread of AIDS (see p 190, 1990).

He explained that drugs in one form or another accounted for over 1,000 deaths in Britain each year, with those under 20 years of age being particularly affected. This demonstrated the dangers of drug misuse and underlined the need for prevention work among young people, which the Government was promoting through the Drug Prevention Initiative and through drugs education initiatives in schools (see p 189, 1990).

Mr Patten pointed out that heroin remained the main drug of addiction. Of new addicts notified in 1990, 84 per cent were reported to be dependent upon it. He recognised that over 70 per cent of the heroin reaching Britain 'comes along the rapidly changing Balkan route[2] – with more drugs entering Western Europe through the newly democratic countries of Central Europe'. Britain had reached agreement with Hungary and Czechoslovakia in April 1991 to strengthen controls along the Balkan route, particularly by increasing the effectiveness of their police and customs.

[1] Home Office Statistical Bulletin No 8/91. *Statistics of the Misuse of Drugs: Addicts Notified to the Home Office, United Kingdom, 1990.* Available free from the Statistical Department, Home Office, Lunar House, Croydon, Surrey CR0 9YD.

[2] The Balkan route is the overland route used to transport heroin and other opiates from Asia, and in particular the Golden Crescent (Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan), into Western Europe.

Drug Seizures and Offences

The total number of seizures of controlled drugs rose from about 38,200 in 1988 to 52,100 in 1989 (the latest year for which figures are available). Part of this increase was due to improved Metropolitan Police recording procedures. Without this change it is estimated that the total recorded number of seizures in 1989 would have been about 49,800, or 30 per cent more than in 1988.

Drug offences include both unlawful possession and drug trafficking. The number of persons found guilty of, cautioned or dealt with by 'compounding' (the payment of a penalty in lieu of prosecution for cases involving the importation of small quantities of drugs) for drug offences in 1989 was 38,400, an increase of 25 per cent on 1988.

In 1989, some 800 offenders, representing 20 per cent of those sentenced for drug trafficking offences, were ordered to pay confiscation orders, with a total value of £7·8 million. This compared with 540 offenders (15 per cent of those sentenced for trafficking) ordered to pay £8·1 million in 1988, and 200 offenders (5 per cent) ordered to pay £1·2 million in 1987.

EUROPEAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON DRUGS

The Pan-European Ministerial Conference on Co-operation on Illicit Drug Abuse Problems took place in Oslo, Norway, on 9 and 10 May, and was attended by representatives from more than 20 Eastern, Central and Western European countries.

Addressing the Conference on 9 May, Mr Patten said: 'Concerted action is needed particularly to help the newly emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, not only to stop their countries being used as an easy route to the wider West, but also to take action now before they get a serious drug problem themselves.'

Britain's Proposals

Mr Patten urged European countries to step up their action plans to combat drug misuse both at home and abroad. To reduce the availability of three key drugs – heroin, cocaine and amphetamines – he suggested that countries should:

1 ensure more effective collaboration between the Pompidou Group,[1] the European Committee to Combat Drugs and the Heads of National Law Enforcement Agencies, and avoid duplication of each institution's efforts;

2 ensure that a suitable framework of co-operation exists in every country to enable police and customs to work closely together;

3 set up a European Drugs Intelligence Unit, based on Britain's National Drugs Intelligence Unit (see p 189, 1990);

4 stem the flow of heroin along the Balkan route, 'both the traditional avenues and the new route transiting more countries in Central and Eastern Europe'. Mr Patten added that he was aware of the practical difficulties facing the enforcement authorities in tackling this problem;

5 deny drug traffickers access to essential precursor chemicals for the illicit manufacture of amphetamines, through the application of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances;[2]

6 combat illicit traffic by sea by the boarding of suspect ships in international waters under the provisions of the same UN Convention; Mr Patten also suggested that the Pompidou Group should work towards the creation of a European Convention on the boarding of ships; and

7 share knowledge in the area of epidemiology and exchange expertise in drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation techniques in order to reduce drug demand.

Continuing, Mr Patten said: 'The ratification and full implementation of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic is the most effective action which countries can take to combat illicit traffic.' He acknowledged that most European countries were promoting legislation to implement the

[1] The Council of Europe's Pompidou Group is the primary forum for developing European co-operation against drug abuse and trafficking.

[2] The Convention provides an effective framework for international co-operation on drugs, with measures on such aspects as controlled deliveries, confiscation of assets, monitoring of precursor chemicals and combating illicit drug traffic by sea.

Convention, which Britain planned to ratify on 1 July 1991.

Concluding, Mr Patten warned that 'whilst even greater resources are currently being expended on combating drug misuse, the problem continues to increase at a rate which gives us no grounds for complacency. This conference provides us with an opportunity to develop real and effective co-operation at the widest European level.'

Education and Training

The Government has published three White Papers designed to transform post-compulsory education and training in England, Wales and Scotland. In higher education the key reform would be the ending of the distinction between universities on the one hand and polytechnics and colleges of higher education on the other. This would build on the Government's plans to improve education and training for 16- to 19-year-olds by removing the barriers between academic and vocational education. Legislation to implement the proposals will be introduced as soon as parliamentary time permits.

The White Papers are:

– *Higher Education: A New Framework*, which contains proposals relating to England, Wales, Scotland and, to a limited extent, Northern Ireland;[1]

– *Education and Training for the 21st Century*, which covers England and Wales;[2] and

– *Access and Opportunity: A Strategy for Education and Training*, covering Scotland.[3]

Increasing numbers of young people are continuing in education and training after age 16, when compulsory education ends. All 16- and 17-year-olds are guaranteed a place in full-time education or training, and all suitably qualified people have access to higher education.[1] In 1990, 60 per cent of 16-year-olds stayed on in full-time education compared with 40 per cent in 1979. Three out of four 17-year-olds are in education or training today compared with two out of ten a decade ago. One in five 18- and 19-year-olds now enters higher education compared with one in eight ten years ago. More adults are also taking advantage of educational opportunities. The Government has set itself a target of achieving mass participation in further and higher education and training while maintaining and enhancing the present high standards.

The increase in the level of publicly funded higher education tuition fees paid as part of student awards is designed to give institutions an incentive to expand efficiently (see pp 210-11, 1989). English polytechnics and colleges were granted autonomy outside local authority control for the same reason (see pp 165-8). More flexible patterns of teaching and learning are being introduced, and the Government sees more scope for the use of credit accumulation and transfer.

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Speaking in London on 20 May, the day on which the White Papers were published, the Prime Minister, Mr John Major, said: 'The reforms in these White Papers mark the latest stage in our drive to open up opportunities, to increase choice and to raise standards in education and training. We have already succeeded in attracting more young people into further and higher education, and more into good quality training, than ever before. But now we are moving a stage further. We are pressing ahead with a package of far-reaching reforms which will help many more young people and adults to make the most of the talents they were born with, and will equip them with the skills which they and employers need.'

[1] Cm 1541. HMSO, £6·60. ISBN 0 10 115412 7.

[2] Cm 1536 (two volumes). HMSO, £11. ISBN 0 10 115362 7.

[3] Cm 1530. HMSO, £5·50. ISBN 0 10 115302 3.

[1] Higher education comprises higher courses in any institution – broadly, those of a standard higher than General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) level or its equivalent – and further education comprises all other post-school courses.

Academic and Vocational Education

Mr Major went on to say that at the heart of the Government's reforms was a determination to break down the artificial barrier dividing academic and vocational education. In the past too many 16-year-olds had been made to feel that further education or training was not suitable for them. As a result, many lacked skills or motivation when starting their working life. The Government was committed to overcoming the academic/vocational distinction. It was going to streamline the system of vocational qualifications and to raise their status, thereby ensuring that they were recognised as being of equal worth as traditional academic qualifications. New diplomas would integrate the two streams, recording achievement in both academic and vocational subjects or combinations of the two.

The Government was committed to levelling up, not levelling down. 'If vocational qualifications are to be held in high regard, standards will have to be tough. What's more, raising the worth of vocational qualifications does not mean watering down academic ones. [GCE] A levels are – and will remain – a benchmark of excellence. We will not change the character of the exam or in any way weaken the syllabus. It is our aim to maintain and strengthen A levels.'

In higher education, the more vocationally oriented polytechnics had come of age, and the division between them and universities would be brought to an end. Again, the Government wanted to see both the academic and vocational approaches commanding the same esteem, with higher education institutions competing for students on equal terms by offering courses which students wanted. This would enable the Government to build on progress already made in attracting young people to higher education. According to Mr Major, more and more young people were being drawn into higher education: in 1979 only one in eight young people entered the higher education sector, while in 1991 the ratio had become one in five. The Government was on course, he said, for achieving a figure of one in three by the year 2000.

The Government's approach was to give people choice; it did not wish to force young people to follow a particular route. It would be for them and their parents to decide whether to take GCE A level or Advanced Supplementary (AS) level courses (see p 135, 1985), vocational qualifications or a mixture of the three. As far as possible the Government wanted young people to be able to choose between going to a sixth-form college (a school which may provide non-academic as well as academic courses for pupils aged 16 to 19), a further education college, staying on in a school sixth form or going into high-quality workplace training.

Training Credits

For those opting for training, the Government was introducing a new initiative: by the mid-1990s every 16- and 17-year-old leaving full-time education would be offered a training credit, typically worth £1,000 or more. This would enable them to buy the specific training that they required from the establishment of their choice.

Institutional Reforms

Polytechnics and higher education colleges had shown that, free from local authority control, it was possible both to raise quality and to cope with an increased number of students. The Government now intended to extend that same freedom to further education colleges and sixth-form colleges. School sixth forms would also be empowered to accept part-time students and adults. These measures would allow colleges and schools to offer an even broader range of courses to a wider mix of people.

Conclusions

The Prime Minister concluded by saying that the proposals contained in the White Papers were designed to build on existing traditions of excellence. 'They will extend choice and provide new opportunities to many more people than ever before. They will encourage excellence . . . [and] help build up the skilled and motivated workforce that employers need. They will bring the classroom and the world of work closer together . . . [and] improve the quality of the careers advice that young people receive. They will give . . . every young person the chance to develop to the

best of his or her ability. They will, in short, give us the key to success.'

HIGHER EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

The White Paper *Higher Education: A New Framework* says that the Government's policies have resulted in record numbers and participation rates in higher education. In line with the Government's aims, higher education has continued to promote the advancement of learning as well as high levels of scholarship. It has also responded to the need to take more account of the economic requirements of the country. For example, it is providing more part-time courses for working people, responding positively to the Government's Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative (which aims to develop more enterprising graduates) and expanding business studies courses and courses containing a modern languages element. Research contracts are increasing private income, and links are being established with higher education institutions in other European countries.

Key Proposals

The main features of the new framework for higher education would be:

– the abolition of the distinction between universities and polytechnics and the establishment of a single framework for higher education;

– the creation of higher education funding councils for England, Scotland and Wales to distribute public funds for teaching and research: and new links to continue the close relationship with Northern Ireland's unitary structure;

– the extension of degree-awarding powers to major institutions and the winding up of the Council for National Academic Awards;

– the extension of the title of 'university' to polytechnics wishing to use it;

– the development of quality control arrangements on a nationwide basis by institutions; and

– the setting up by the funding councils of quality assessment units to advise on overall standards.

Single Framework

According to the White Paper, the distinction between universities and polytechnics and other higher education colleges (including central institutions and colleges providing higher education in Scotland) – the so-called binary divide – is an obstacle to further progress. The Government therefore proposes to set up a single framework for the whole of the higher education sector.

The present divide originated with the creation of the polytechnics. These were established principally to provide vocationally oriented studies in higher education equal in status to more academic courses. Together with other colleges of higher education, they have tended to concentrate on offering vocational courses at degree level and below and carrying out applied research. They have, in addition, given emphasis to part-time and other courses designed to widen access and meet local regional needs. In contrast, universities have continued to undertake for the most part full-time academic degree and postgraduate courses, together with associated pure and applied research. There is, however, some overlap between degree and postgraduate courses provided in universities and polytechnics and colleges of higher education.

Under the White Paper proposals, there would be a single funding structure for universities, polytechnics and colleges providing higher education. Separate higher education funding councils in England, Scotland and Wales would distribute public funds for both teaching and research; these arrangements would take account of the particular circumstances of each country. Public funding for teaching and research would continue to be separately identified. New links would be formed to continue the close relationship with Northern Ireland's existing unitary structure.

The constitutions of the new funding councils would be modelled on the present Universities Funding Council and the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council. They would be independent, non-departmental, public bodies, appointed by the Government, with a strong industrial and commercial element. The Open University

would be brought under the funding council for England.

Under the proposed new framework for higher education the Government would continue to devise overall strategies for higher education and to make the necessary contributions to funding. As now, it would look to students, employers and the wider community to make known their needs and expectations and to the new funding councils and higher education establishments to respond by increasing quality and efficiency. The Government would like to see greater demand for courses in science, engineering and technology, and polytechnics, rather than universities, becoming the first choice of many able school leavers.

Quality Assurance

The White Paper goes on to say that, as demand for higher education expands and competition between institutions increases as a result of the proposed changes, there would be a need for new arrangements for quality assurance. Polytechnics and, under certain conditions, other major institutions of higher education would take on degree-awarding powers. Non-degree-awarding institutions would seek validation of their courses from a degree-awarding establishment of their choice, with the arrangements being approved by the proposed new quality audit unit. As a result, the Council for National Academic Awards, which presently awards qualifications in the non-university higher education sector, would be disbanded.

There would be external scrutiny of the quality control arrangements of individual higher education institutions by a nationwide quality audit unit developed essentially by the institutions. This would be expected to liaise with the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and other vocational and professional bodies involved in quality control and validation. A quality assessment unit would be formed within each funding council to advise on relative quality across the institutions; these would co-operate with each other in order to maintain a common approach to quality assessment.

Because polytechnics and other higher education establishments are achieving the same academic standards and offering the same quality of education as most universities, they would be able to use the word 'university' in their title if they so wished. This might be desirable, the White Paper says, in view of the lower status accorded by many to non-university higher education and the lack of understanding of the role of polytechnics by people overseas. Nonetheless, polytechnics would be expected to retain their bias towards industry, vocational education and applied research.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING WHITE PAPER FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

The White Paper *Education and Training for the 21st Century* outlines the aims of the Government's policies for post-16 education and training.

These are:

– to strengthen the educational foundations laid at school;

– to improve the quality of learning and its relevance to work; and

– to increase opportunities for young people to train and continue education after age 16.

Background

The 1980s saw a considerable rise in the proportion of young people taking part in education and training. In England between 1981 and 1989 the proportion of 16-year-olds in education and training rose from 74 to 86 per cent. Over the same period the proportion of 17-year-olds in education and training grew from 53 to 70 per cent.

The White Paper says that the National Curriculum is setting higher standards and raising expectations as to what pupils at all levels can achieve. The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) has complemented the National Curriculum by helping to equip young people aged 14 to 18 for the demands of working life. The introduction of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) has broadened the scope of examination syllabuses and has led to higher levels of attainment at 16 years of age and to larger numbers continuing in education and training after 16.

Compacts, which bring together pupils and students and employers in areas of urban deprivation in an effort to raise attainment levels, have brought about improved attendance and higher attainment on the part of pupils and students. In Great Britain the compact network involves over 92,000 young people, nearly 500 schools and colleges and around 9,000 employers who guarantee more than 25,000 jobs.

The local education authority careers service gives individual guidance to over 1 million students every year. It also helps to place about 70,000 young people in jobs and 150,000 in Youth Training (see pp 142-3, 1990) each year. Over 3 million Youth Training places have been taken up by 16- and 17-year-olds since 1983, and the proportion of young people in apprenticeships has been maintained.

Employers help in providing education and training through membership of Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). The network of 82 TECs, and 22 Local Enterprise Companies in Scotland, will be fully operational by the end of 1991.

Key Proposals

The proposed new framework for further education would incorporate the following features:

– Colleges would become autonomous institutions funded by national further education councils in England and Wales.

– The work of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications would proceed at a faster rate and new general vocational qualifications would be developed.

– Advanced Diplomas would be introduced for students passing GCE A and AS level examinations and for those gaining vocational qualifications to the same standard.

– A and AS level examinations would be strengthened.

– The school leaving date would be adjusted to require all 16-year-olds to complete their studies at the end of the summer term.

– School sixth forms would be enabled to admit part-time students and adults.

– The compact network would be extended.

– Training credits would be given to every 16- and 17-year-old leaving full-time education.

– New ways of managing the careers service according to local needs would be encouraged.

Further Education Colleges and Sixth-form Colleges

Under the White Paper proposals, further education and sixth-form colleges would become autonomous institutions outside local authority control. They would be funded by government-appointed national further education councils in England and Wales from 1 April 1993. These would allocate resources, made available by the Government, to individual institutions. In order to encourage efficient growth in the system, funding would be provided by the councils through a block grant distributed between colleges and an additional element directly related to student numbers. The funding councils would be responsible for the quality of the education and training which they financed and for ensuring that enough further education was provided. Suitable full-time courses would have to be available for all young people wanting them.

Colleges would be free to employ their own staff, enter into contracts on their own behalf and manage their own resources. The distinctions between colleges of further education and sixth-form colleges should, the White Paper says, be removed. The latter would be able to continue their strong academic traditions while at the same time extending vocational education and attracting more students from non-traditional groups. Further education colleges should be required, as schools already are, to publish examination results, so that young people, parents and employers can make informed judgments about the quality of provision.

The funding councils would be responsible for the public funding of adult education. Training and Enterprise Councils would continue to part-finance work-related further education in further education colleges.

Schools

School sixth forms would be permitted to admit part-time students and adults and to accept training credits (see p 231) or charge

fees. The main work of sixth forms would continue to be catering for young people studying full-time.

The school leaving date would be adjusted so that 16-year-old pupils would be obliged to finish their studies at the end of the summer term (in July). This would ensure that all pupils would complete stage 4 of the National Curriculum and sit their GCSE examinations, thereby having their level of attainment at age 16 properly assessed.

Compacts

Training and Enterprise Councils, in partnership with local education authorities, would create compacts nationwide under the White Paper proposals. The Government would provide financial support to start up compacts, matching support attracted from private sector and local authority sources.

Qualifications

Much progress has been made in developing and extending practical, job-related, qualifications. The Government's proposals would create a comprehensive structure of qualifications, with the breadth and choice required by young people and employers, in which academic and vocational qualifications would command equal esteem. National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) will be available for all major sectors of employment by the end of 1992. The National Council for Vocational Qualifications is to work with others in devising more general job-related qualifications within the NVQ framework for young people wanting a broad preparation for employment.

The Government would promote equality of status for academic and vocational qualifications by developing a new system of Ordinary and Advanced Diplomas. Students gaining an appropriate number of GCSE passes, equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of these, would receive the Ordinary Diploma. The Advanced Diplomas would be awarded to those students passing an appropriate number of GCE A level and AS examinations, students gaining vocational qualifications at the same standard and those with passes in a mixture of the two. A and AS level syllabuses and examinations would be strengthened and made more consistent.

Training Credits

The Government aims to attract many more young people into training by giving a training credit to every 16- and 17-year-old leaving full-time education. Training credits are a new way of promoting youth training, placing buying power in the hands of young people. Credits are now offered to 10 per cent of school leavers in pilot study areas. This system encourages students to take up their entitlement to vocational education and take full advantage of training and of the opportunity to qualify with a National Vocational Qualification at Level 2 or higher.

Under the White Paper proposals, the Government would progressively extend credits from April 1993, with the aim of offering a training credit to all 16- and 17-year-olds leaving full-time education by 1996.

Careers Service

The school curriculum for young people aged 14 to 16 would be made more relevant to their further education, training and career options. With the introduction of training credits and other changes in education and training, it would be increasingly important to maintain a high-quality careers service linked closely to employers.

The Government proposes that local education authorities should be encouraged to co-operate with TECs in overseeing the operation of the service locally. Government financial support would be available to start up such partnerships. There would be a range of options for administering the careers service, including direct management by TECs and contracting-out to the private sector. Investment would be increased in the training of careers service advisory staff and in careers libraries in schools.

Employers

Under the White Paper proposals, employers, through their involvement in TECs, would have bigger roles in colleges, compacts, the careers service, new training credits arrangements and in the new funding councils for further education.

Other Proposals

All young people would be offered a record of achievement. The National Record of

Achievement, launched by the Government in February 1991, is designed to present a simple record of achievement in education and training throughout working life. From 1992 the great majority of school leavers will have this record.

Proposed training targets should stimulate employers to encourage young people to become qualified in their first years at work and reduce significantly the number of jobs without training.

According to the White Paper, employers should consider enlarging pay differentials for skilled and unskilled work as an incentive to training.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING WHITE PAPER FOR SCOTLAND

The White Paper for Scotland, *Access and Opportunity: A Strategy for Education and Training*, contains parallel proposals to those for England and Wales. Thus, it makes provision for:

– a new role for employers in the careers service;

– expansion of training credits, with bids to operate new schemes from April 1993, and for complete coverage of young people leaving full-time education by 1996;

– extension of compacts outside urban partnership areas and their integration with education-business partnerships;

– the introduction of general Scottish Vocational Qualifications to prepare young people for a range of occupations and higher education; and

– further education colleges to be freestanding corporate bodies financed by central government from 1 April 1993.

Health Strategy for England

Government proposals for developing a health strategy for England, which sets objectives and targets for improving the nation's health, are contained in a Green Paper published on 4 June. Proposals in the consultation document apply only to England; parallel strategies are being developed for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Comments on the Green Paper are invited by 31 October.

The strategy set out in the Green Paper[1] is the first of its kind proposed for England. It seeks to reduce the level of premature deaths and illness caused by preventable diseases, such as coronary heart disease, cancer and strokes. In addition, there are proposals to tackle other major illnesses, such as diabetes, and targets for reducing health risks from smoking, high alcohol consumption and an unhealthy diet.

Background

The Government considers that people in England enjoy a high standard of health. Life expectancy is 73 years for a man and 78 for a woman compared with 44 and 47 a century ago. In the last ten years alone there has been an increase of two years in life expectancy. However, the Government recognises that major health problems remain. While people now live longer, many still die prematurely and have the quality of their lives, especially in their later years, impaired by avoidable ill health.

The recent reforms of the National Health Service (NHS), introduced under the National Health Service and Community Care Act (see pp 29-34, 1990), have led to changes in the management of the NHS and in the organisation of family health, community and hospital services. Their aim has been to give the health service a much greater capacity to address Britain's health needs. Under the reforms, health authorities have explicit responsibility for improving the health of their residents. They are now required to identify local health needs, obtain the services necessary to meet those needs and take initiatives to improve health. New service contracts for family doctors and dentists, introduced in 1990, place greater emphasis on preventive health care. For example, special payments are made to doctors who achieve target levels in the uptake of

[1] *The Health of the Nation: A Consultative Document for Health in England.* Department of Health. Cm 1523. HMSO, £11·80. ISBN 0 10 115232 9.

child immunisation and screening for cervical cancer.

In line with the increased emphasis on disease prevention, the Government announced in October 1990 (see p 396, 1990) that it was preparing a major new strategy with targets for improving the nation's health. Its approach has been endorsed by the World Health Organisation, whose Health For All by the Year 2000 programme initiated such strategies worldwide.

THE GREEN PAPER

Main Emphasis

The overall emphasis of the Green Paper is on the prevention of illness and the promotion of good health. This represents the Government's aim to strike a balance between conventional health care requirements (treatment and rehabilitation) and preventive health care.

The document also underlines the role of the individual in avoiding illness and enjoying good health. Adopting a healthy lifestyle can help to prevent many of the main causes of premature death in Britain – for example, heart disease. The document also emphasises the need for a balance between individual responsibility and government action. Health education provided by the Government is a vital factor, enabling individuals to exercise free choice on the basis of key information.

Approach

Central to the strategy is the identification of objectives and targets for improving the overall level of health. 'Challenging but realistic targets' have been set to reduce the level of illness and premature death caused by certain diseases. The Government has adopted a three-point approach to achieve this. It aims to:

1 identify key areas where improvement can be made;

2 set clear objectives and targets for improvements within those areas, at national or local level; progress in achieving such targets will be monitored; and

3 review and reappraise priorities over time and bring further areas within the scope of national priorities and targets.

Objectives and Targets

The document sets objectives and possible targets for selected areas which account for substantial ill health and premature death. Overall objectives for each area seek to reduce the level of preventable ill health and death. The main areas of concern are described below, together with possible targets.

Coronary Heart Disease

Although the death rate from coronary heart disease has been declining in England since the early 1970s, the disease currently causes over a quarter of all deaths in England and is the main single cause of premature death in people under 65. It is estimated that this disease accounts for around 2·5 per cent of total NHS expenditure.

Possible targets include:

– a 30 per cent reduction between 1988 and 2000 in deaths among people under 65; and

– a 30-minute time limit for emergency treatment to begin on heart-attack patients.

Strokes

Strokes are a major cause of disability among elderly people and accounted for 12 per cent of all deaths in England in 1989. Between 1969 and 1989 deaths from strokes among people under 65 in England fell by about 50 per cent, and the Government seeks to continue this trend.

Possible targets include:

– a 30 per cent reduction between 1988 and 2000 in deaths among people under 65; and

– early detection and treatment of raised blood pressure and rehabilitation of stroke survivors.

Cancers

After coronary heart disease, cancers are the most common cause of death. In 1989 cancers accounted for 25 per cent of all deaths in people under 65, the most frequent types being lung cancer in men and breast and lung cancers in women. Around 7 per cent of NHS expenditure is allocated to cancer treatment and prevention.

Possible targets include:

– a 25 per cent reduction by 2000, compared with 1990, in deaths from breast cancer among women invited for screening; and

– all eligible women to have been invited for cervical cancer screening by the end of 1993.

Diet and Drinking

Nutritional deficiencies are no longer a major cause for concern in England. However, while an improved diet has contributed to a longer life span, present levels of consumption of saturated fats, salt and alcohol are a cause for concern. Over 85 per cent of people are eating more than the recommended levels of saturated fats (15 per cent or less of total energy intake). One in four men and one in 12 women are drinking more than the recommended intake of alcohol.

Possible targets include:

– By 2005 at least 60 per cent of the population should derive less than 15 per cent of their food energy from saturated fatty acids.

– By 2005 the proportion of obese adults should be 7 per cent or less, compared with the 1987 level of approximately 10 per cent.

– By 2005 fewer than one in six men and one in 18 women should be drinking above the recommended intake of alcohol.

Smoking

Smoking is the largest single preventable cause of death in England, accounting for a third of all deaths among people aged between 40 and 64. It also contributes to many forms of cancer, as well as cardiovascular and respiratory disorders. Currently 32 per cent of the population smokes cigarettes, compared with 45 per cent in 1974. The Government seeks to reduce the level of smoking still further.

A possible target is:

– to reduce by the year 2000 cigarette-smoking among men to 22 per cent and among women to 21 per cent, from current levels of 33 per cent and 30 per cent respectively.

Health of Infants and Children

Possible targets include:

– to increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed at birth from 64 per cent in 1985 to 75 per cent by 2000; and

– to ensure by 2003 that 12-year-olds have far fewer decayed, missing or filled permanent teeth.

Communicable Diseases

While communicable diseases are not at present a major cause of death in England, they still cause illness, lost working days and economic loss. The Government is keen to promote immunisation, particularly among infants.

A possible target is:

– to increase by 1995 the national target for childhood immunisation from 90 per cent to 95 per cent.

Diabetes

It is estimated that about 500,000 people in England suffer from diabetes. Some 4 to 5 per cent of NHS expenditure is allocated to the care of people with this disorder.

A possible target is:

– a reduction in the occurrence of complications arising from diabetes, such as blindness, amputations, kidney failure and heart disease.

The document also discusses the need for improvement in other areas, such as asthma, mental health, rehabilitation services, the prevention of accidents and environmental quality.

Developing the Strategy

Following the five-month consultation period, the Government intends to agree a limited number of definitive key areas, objectives and targets to form the basis of the strategy. More key areas will be added as the strategy develops. Methods for achieving the definitive targets will be described in a White Paper, to be published early in 1992.

To help develop and promote the strategy, a steering group, supported by various working groups, will be set up with a wide membership from within and outside the NHS. The English Health Strategy Steering Group will begin work during the consultation period and continue after publication of the White Paper to help implement and monitor the strategy.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Presenting the Green Paper to the House of Commons on 4 June (*Hansard*, Vol 192, No 116, cols 155-7), the Secretary of State for Health, Mr William Waldegrave, said: 'The production of a strategy for health . . . and the action that follows will secure further improvements in the country's health. It complements our commitment to high quality health care with a wider commitment to the nation's health. This health strategy is an important new undertaking – the first ever strategy for England.'

The recent administrative reforms of the NHS, said Mr Waldegrave, would facilitate the introduction of the new strategy. Health authorities would now be able to concentrate on their strategic role of assessing how best to improve the health of the local population.

Mr Waldegrave emphasised that the health strategy extended beyond the responsibilities of the Department of Health. It built on recent reforms of food safety laws (see pp 145-7, 1990) and the proposals on the environment (see pp 358-61, 1990).

The success of the strategy would not just depend on action by the Government and the NHS. Mr Waldegrave called upon schools, local authorities, voluntary groups, employers and the media to promote the health message. However, much responsibility lay with the individual in adopting a healthier lifestyle. The Green Paper marked the beginning of an intensive discussion period aimed 'at achieving, as nearly as possible, national consensus'. Mr Waldegrave commented: 'Success will depend not only on the commitment of Government, the professions and the million staff we employ but on real commitment by the public as well.'

Government Action on AIDS

Recent government measures to control the spread of HIV infection and to help those affected by the virus were announced in May. These include the establishment of an AIDS Action Group and the creation of a new trust to administer government payments to affected haemophiliacs. Recent statistics show a steady increase in HIV infection among heterosexual people.

Latest Figures

The latest figures released by the Department of Health show that the number of AIDS cases reported in Britain is still rising.

– By the end of March 1991 the total number of cases reported was 4,454. Of these, 2,549 people (57 per cent) had died. Comparable figures at the end of March 1990 were 3,157 cases reported, with 1,773 (56 per cent) known to have died.

– By the end of March 1991 the total number of people reported as HIV positive was 15,337, compared with 13,632 at the end of March 1990.

However, the true number of infected people is thought to be greater. Because of the nature of the reporting system, the number of cases reported each month does not accurately reflect the number of cases of AIDS diagnosed during the period. As in previous years, about 70 per cent of the reports of AIDS cases came from the four London regions.

AIDS in Heterosexuals

Cases of AIDS among heterosexuals continue to rise more rapidly than in any other group of AIDS-infected people. Almost half of the infected heterosexual people are women, who if pregnant can transmit the infection to their babies. During the 12 months to the end of March 1991:

– reported cases of AIDS acquired through heterosexual intercourse rose by 47 per cent (from 88 people to 129); and

– reported cases in drug misusers infected by sharing injecting equipment rose by 77 per cent (from 61 people to 108).

AIDS in Women

During the year to March 1991 reported cases of AIDS in women rose by 85 per cent (from 52 people to 96).

AIDS in Homosexual or Bisexual Men

During the year to March 1991 reported cases of AIDS in this group increased by 28 per cent (from 740 to 951).

Anonymised HIV Testing

A further indication of the prevalence of HIV infection in Britain has been provided by the first results of the anonymised HIV testing programme, which began in January 1990 (see p 480, 1989). The government-funded tests, which are the first of their kind in Europe, involve testing blood for HIV infection from a wide selection of patients who attend antenatal and genito-urinary medicine clinics. The anonymous tests are carried out on surplus blood from other tests and so it is not possible to trace the result back to an individual patient. The anonymised testing programme has now been extended to some general hospitals and to some newborn infants.

The first results of the anonymised testing programme showed that on average one in 500 women attending certain antenatal clinics in London was infected with HIV. In the small number of clinics surveyed in outer London and south-east England, cases of HIV infection ranged from one in 300 to one in 2,500, although half of those clinics reported no HIV positive results. Antenatal clinics in other parts of England reported only one test in 16,000 as HIV positive.

Results from surveys of sexually transmitted disease clinics in inner London found that one in 500 heterosexual women was HIV positive. For heterosexual men attending those clinics, the figure was one in 100, while for homosexual and bisexual men it was one in five.

Announcing the results, the Minister of State at the Department of Health, Mrs Virginia Bottomley, emphasised that the survey samples were small and the preliminary results should be interpreted with great care. However, the results provided valuable information to help the Government target its response to the AIDS epidemic. The figures also illustrated the extent to which HIV was a problem in London.

In response to the findings, Mrs Bottomley announced the setting up of an AIDS Action Group to reinforce action in areas with high rates of HIV. The Action Group would include representatives from health and local authorities, voluntary organisations and the local community. It would focus on local factors, such as:

– access for people with AIDS or HIV to local services;

– local AIDS prevention and educational initiatives; and

– effective ways of reaching particular groups of the population, such as women, children and people from ethnic minorities.

New Haemophiliacs Trust

A new trust has been set up to administer government payments to haemophiliacs infected with HIV. Following an announcement in December 1990 (see p 46), the Government confirmed that it was making available £42 million to haemophiliacs who have pursued claims against the Government for damages in respect of accidental infection with HIV, and to certain other haemophiliacs with HIV. The Macfarlane (Special Payments) (No 2) Trust was set up on 3 May as a special arm of the Macfarlane Trust, which provides financial and other help to AIDS-infected haemophiliacs and their families.

Anti-smoking Measures

Details of a revised voluntary agreement on tobacco advertising were announced by the Secretary of State for Health, Mr William Waldegrave, in the House of Commons on 18 April. New health warnings on all tobacco products have been proposed, and government funding of £1 million for a campaign to discourage smoking in pregnancy has been announced.

Voluntary Agreement on Tobacco Advertising

The agreement, which will shortly be concluded between the Government and the tobacco industry, will come into force later in 1991 and will run for three years.

In a major addition to the existing voluntary agreement (see p 237), the tobacco

industry has agreed to remove 50 per cent of shopfront advertising over five years. The change will apply to all external permanent advertising material on shops, and priority will be given to reducing the number of permanent advertising signs on shops which are clearly visible from schools. In addition, all external signs on shops will carry a health warning. The present ban on poster advertising which is visible from schools will be extended to children's playgrounds.

The last voluntary agreement of this kind between the Government and the tobacco industry was concluded in 1986 (see pp 131-2, 1986). Among other things it introduced a ban on tobacco advertising in cinemas and in a range of magazines aimed at young women, and ended the advertising of high-tar cigarettes. It also banned poster advertising outside schools, and placed an upper limit on the amount that could be spent on poster advertising. The new agreement will retain all the features of the 1986 agreement, as well as introducing the new measures referred to above.

New Health Warnings for Tobacco Products

In February draft regulations which propose new health warnings for all tobacco products were issued for consultation to the tobacco industry, the retail trade, and health and consumer groups. The proposed warnings would implement a European Community directive, adopted in November 1989, which seeks to harmonise labelling requirements for tobacco products throughout the Community. The directive must be implemented by the end of 1991.

The regulations would require the warning 'Tobacco seriously damages health' to appear prominently on the front of all cigarette packets and on all other tobacco products. In addition, one of six warnings would be used in rotation on the back of the packet. These are:

– Smoking causes cancer;

– Smoking causes heart disease;

– Smoking causes fatal diseases;

– Smoking kills;

– Smoking when pregnant harms your baby; and

– Protect children: don't make them breathe your smoke.

The tar and nicotine yields of the brand of cigarette would be printed on the side of the packet.

Programme to Discourage Smoking in Pregnancy

It was also announced in February that government funding of £1 million over two years would be given to the Health Education Authority to enable it to launch a project aimed at discouraging smoking during pregnancy. The project will seek to increase awareness of the health issues and contribute to the support services needed to help women to stop smoking. The programme will aim to reduce tobacco-related damage to the baby and also to protect the health of the mother. This project is in addition to the programmes already being run by the Health Education Authority on smoking among teenagers (see p 77, 1989) and adult smoking.

Shorter Notes

INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

At the 43rd annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), held at Reykjavik, Iceland, from 27 to 31 May, Britain defended the present moratorium on commercial whaling.

Before the meeting the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Mr John Gummer, wrote to other member countries of the IWC, urging them to continue the moratorium, which was essential to international efforts to conserve the whale. He said that whaling had led to the over-exploitation of one species of whale after another. The substantial exploitation of minke whales had begun because mankind had depleted stocks of larger, more commercially attractive whales. There could be no good reason to resume commercial whaling, since stock assessments and revised management procedures were still being prepared. It was also

necessary to be satisfied about killing methods.

Reporting the outcome of the meeting to the House of Commons on 3 June, Mr Gummer said that Britain had set and achieved three principal targets:

1 The moratorium on commercial whaling remained in force. Requests from Japan and Iceland for modest quotas for minke or fin whales had been rejected, as had a request from Norway to remove protection from minke whales in the north-east Atlantic. British co-sponsored resolutions calling on Japan and the Soviet Union to reconsider their proposed research whaling programmes had been passed.

2 Killing methods had been considered, and Britain had secured the establishment of a special study to review the humaneness and all other aspects of the methods of killing whales. Such a review was necessary, the previous one having taken place ten years ago.

3 The work of protecting small cetaceans, such as dolphins and porpoises, had been carried forward. The IWC was divided as to whether it had the competence to deal with small cetaceans; Britain was of the view that it did. The issue had been pressed in discussions, and Mr Gummer hoped that the way had been set for a more constructive debate in 1992.

The Minister added that Britain had co-sponsored a successful resolution that would ensure that a comprehensive report on whales, dolphins and porpoises would be presented to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. This would provide an additional platform to protect whales and small cetaceans, since some countries which hunted these animals were outside the IWC. The conservation of whales had been pursued successfully for 1991, and Britain had much of which to be proud. 'We must not, however, let up in our efforts, for the preservation of the whales demands our whole-hearted support.'

Sources: *Hansard*, Vol 192, No 115, cols 35-6; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food news release, 20.5.91.

AIR POLLUTION

The Government has decided that the public should be offered advice when ground-level ozone reaches high concentrations in the air, it was announced in the House of Commons on 7 May. This will enable people who are particularly sensitive to ozone to take steps to reduce their exposure.

The Advisory Group on the Medical Aspects of Air Pollution Episodes has recently completed a report on ozone and its effects on health. This deals with ground-level ozone, which is formed by the action of sunlight on pollutants, especially in summer. Further reports will cover nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide.

Mr Stephen Dorrell, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, announced the report's conclusion that ozone levels experienced in Britain during hot summer weather were unlikely to result in permanent lung damage. General warnings to the public were not therefore justified. However, the report also found that some individuals especially sensitive to ozone might experience some respiratory symptoms when taking vigorous exercise during a period of high ozone concentrations. Advice on ozone levels should be given so that those likely to be affected could reduce their exposure. Mr Dorrell said that the Government accepted the report's recommendations and was acting on them.

The following measures are being taken to fulfil the report's recommendations:

– Information on air quality is being included by the Meteorological Office in its forecasts when ozone concentrations are expected to exceed 100 parts per thousand million (see p 395, 1990).

– An Air Quality Help Line has been established by the Department of the Environment and the Meteorological Office to provide health advice.

– Publicity will be given regularly to the Help Line, which will be repeated if ozone levels reach 200 parts per thousand million.

– The Government's Chief Medical Officer has written to all doctors, setting out the report's main conclusions.

The Department of the Environment and the Meteorological Office have been issuing daily air quality bulletins for some six months. The monitoring system on which the bulletins depended is also being improved. A new network will come into use early in 1992, and will be expanded and improved thereafter. This investment will total £3 million and will in due course lead to improved bulletins.

Sources: *Hansard*, Vol 190, No 102, written answers, cols 432-4; Department of the Environment news release, 7.5.91.

NOISE

Britain's first Neighbourhood Noise Awareness Scheme has been launched, implementing a recommendation of the Noise Review Working Party (see pp 389-91, 1990). Development work on the scheme has been funded by the Government.

Mr Tony Baldry, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, announced that a scheme had been launched in Forest Hill, part of the borough of Lewisham in south-east London. The scheme's aim was to encourage the residents of the area to draw up a code of conduct and to agree on standards of reasonable behaviour. 'The code will say whatever the residents want it to say; there is no national model telling people what they should do.' A leaflet had also been circulated to local residents, in association with the local authority, tenants' associations and the police, giving advice on noise levels and guidance on what to do if disturbed by noise.

Source: Department of the Environment news release, 15.5.91.

UK FILM COMMISSION

The UK Film Commission, a new initiative aimed at revitalising the British film industry, was announced on 12 May by the then Minister for Industry, Lord Hesketh (see p 209). The initiative was developed after discussions between the Government and representatives of the film industry held in July 1990 (see p 261, 1990).

The UK Film Commission will provide a service designed to attract more film productions from overseas to Britain, offering information on work permits, tax and legislative requirements as well as services tailored to the needs of individual producers. The Commission's chairman will co-ordinate the role played by local bodies, and help to set up local bodies where necessary.

The Commission will be incorporated as a company, receiving £3·5 million of government funding over four years; it will also seek to attract finance from the film industry.

Source: Department of Trade and Industry news release, 12.5.91.

CROSS-MEDIA PROMOTION

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Mr Peter Lilley, announced on 16 May that he had accepted recommendations made in the Sadler Report on cross-media promotion.[1] The recommendations are that:

– the Director General of Fair Trading should be asked to consider referring to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission the practice by the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) of using air time to promote its magazines; and

– the newspaper industry should be invited to devise a code of practice on cross-media promotion covering advertising and editorial content.

Source: Department of Trade and Industry news release, 16.5.91.

ANTI-DRUG MISUSE MEASURES IN SPORT

New Education Campaign

On 23 May the Sports Council launched a new education campaign against drug misuse in sport. Over the next six months the Council plans to target sports governing bodies

[1] *Enquiry into Standards of Cross Media Promotion.* Report to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry by John Sadler, CBE. Cm 1436. HMSO, £12·60. ISBN 0 11 114362 1.

and sportsmen and women at all levels to inform them of the dangers and consequences of drug misuse.

The programme will offer:

– a doping control information manual, aimed at sports governing bodies, which will contain guidelines for improving doping regulations in all sports;

– a video which will inform élite competitors of the dangers of drug misuse, and an information handbook explaining the procedures of sample collection and giving advice on medical treatment at home and overseas; and

– a poster campaign, depicting well-known sportsmen and women speaking out against drug taking, which will be aimed at young participants in sport.

Doping Control Programme

On 23 May the Sports Council also published the results of its 1990-91 doping control programme.

In a year when the number of samples taken rose by 14 per cent (from 3,287 to 3,832), comparisons with 1989-90 show that the total number of positive drug reports fell from 48 to 41. So far governing bodies have taken action in 35 of the 1990-91 cases, resulting in a number of suspensions and life bans.

Funding for the Council's doping control programme exceeded £650,000 – an increase of over 50 per cent since 1988-89. This has allowed the doping control unit to invest in new testing equipment and to increase its out-of-competition testing by 84 per cent (258 samples in 1988-89 compared with 476 in 1990-91). The number of sports now subject to this form of testing has risen from 19 in 1988-89 to 29 in 1990-91.

Sources: Sports Council news releases, 23.5.91.

Documentation

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External Affairs and Defence

St Helena. FCO fact sheet, No 219/91.

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Bank of England Report and Accounts 1991. Available free from the Bank of England, Threadneedle Street, London EC2R 8AH.

Bank of England Banking Act Report for 1990-91. Available free from the Bank of England, Threadneedle Street, London EC2R 8AH.

The System of Notes and Coins. Third Report from the House of Commons Treasury and Civil Service Committee, Session 1990-91. Report, together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices. HMSO, £7·85. ISBN 0 10 224591 6.

Directory of Employers' Associations, Trades Unions, Joint Organisations, etc. Department of Employment. HMSO, £10·50. ISBN 0 11 361321 0.

Training: Developing Skills for the Future of the Offshore Industry. Available free from the Offshore Supplies Office, Alhambra House, 45 Waterloo Street, Glasgow G2 6AS.

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Small Firms in Britain 1991. Department of Employment. HMSO, £4. ISBN 0 11 361320 2.

Small Firms in Scotland. Available free from the Scottish Office Industry Department, 45 Waterloo Street, Glasgow G2 6AT.

MINIM 1990 – A Guide to MAFF's Work 1989-1994. An information system designed as a planning tool for ministers and senior management. It gives a detailed picture of the work of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, describing the objectives of its 65 individual programmes and 69 sub-programmes. Available from MAFF Publications, London SE99 7TP. £20, plus £1·50 postage and packing.

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Safety in Coal Mines. Government Observations on the First Report from the House of Commons Energy Committee, Session 1990-91 (see p 86).

Report with Appendix together with the Proceedings of the Committee. HMSO, £3·10, ISBN 0 10 240391 0.

Office of Electricity Regulation: Annual Report 1990. HMSO, £10·50. ISBN 0 10 235591 6.

Waterborne Passenger Statistics 1980-90. Department of Transport Statistics Report. HMSO, £8·45. ISBN 0 11 551023 0.

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Environmental, Social and Cultural Affairs

Planning and Affordable Housing (see p 222). Department of the Environment circular 1991/7. HMSO, £1·50. ISBN 0 11 752432 8.

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